

**IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please cancel claims 6 and 15 without prejudice or disclaimer.

Please amend claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A utility knife comprising:

a housing;

said housing having a forward portion, a rear portion, and a middle portion;

a cutting member;

said cutting member being attached to said forward portion;

said rear portion, including a grip for enabling a user to grasp the knife with a hand;

a pivot wheel;

said pivot wheel being attached to said middle portion;

at least a part of said pivot wheel being received inside said housing with only a portion of said pivot wheel extending from said housing for balanced engagement between said cutting member at said forward portion and said pivot wheel at said middle portion by application of force on said forward portion and said middle

portion whereby the knife is stabilized during use about said pivot wheel.

2. (Currently Amended) A utility knife ~~as set forth in Claim 1~~ wherein comprising:

a housing;

said housing having a forward portion, a rear portion, and a middle portion;

a cutting member;

said cutting member being attached to said forward portion;

said rear portion, including a grip for enabling a user to grasp the knife with a hand;

a pivot wheel;

said pivot wheel being attached to said middle portion;

at least a part of said pivot wheel being received inside said housing whereby the knife is stabilized during use;

said housing ~~includes~~ including first and second sides;

each of said first and second sides including a wheel track for receiving said pivot wheel.

3. (Currently Amended) A utility knife ~~as set forth in Claim 1~~ further including comprising:

a housing;

said housing having a forward portion, a rear portion,  
and a middle portion;

a cutting member;

said cutting member being attached to said forward  
portion;

said rear portion, including a grip for enabling a user  
to grasp the knife with a hand;

a pivot wheel;

said pivot wheel being attached to said middle portion;

at least a part of said pivot wheel being received inside  
said housing whereby the knife is stabilized during use;

an opening extending through said middle portion;

said opening being adapted to receive ~~the~~ an index finger  
of the user.

4. (Currently Amended) A The utility knife as set forth  
in Claim 3, wherein said wheel is in ~~the~~ a shape of a ring having  
a rim; said rim is located adjacent to said opening.

5. A The utility knife as set forth in Claim 4, further  
including a curved hub wall inside said housing and extending about  
said opening; said rim of said wheel is located adjacent to said  
hub wall and engaging at least a portion of said hub wall during  
use of said knife.

6. (Cancelled)

7. (Currently Amended) A utility knife ~~as set forth in~~  
~~Claim 6 wherein~~ comprising:

a housing;

said housing having a forward portion, a rear portion,  
and a middle portion;

a cutting member;

said cutting member being attached to said forward  
portion;

said rear portion, including a grip for enabling a user  
to grasp the knife with a hand;

a pivot wheel;

said pivot wheel being attached to said middle portion;  
at least a part of said pivot wheel being received inside  
said housing whereby the knife is stabilized during use;

said knife being adapted to cut a work piece;

said rear portion including a protruding section separate  
from said grip;

said protruding section being adapted to protect the hand  
of the user grasping the knife from contacting the work piece;

said protruding section ~~includes~~ including a skid plate.

8. A The utility knife as set forth in Claim 1, further including a storage compartment in said housing; said storage compartment is adapted to receive spare cutting members.

9. (Currently Amended) A utility knife ~~as set forth in Claim 1~~ wherein comprising:

a housing;

said housing having a forward portion, a rear portion, and a middle portion;

a cutting member;

said cutting member being attached to said forward portion;

said rear portion, including a grip for enabling a user to grasp the knife with a hand;

a pivot wheel;

said pivot wheel being attached to said middle portion;

at least a part of said pivot wheel being received inside said housing whereby the knife is stabilized during use;

said housing ~~has~~ having first and second sides and a mechanism for securing said first side to said second side;

a storage compartment in said housing;

said storage compartment being adapted to receive spare cutting members;

a rotation mechanism for enabling said first and second sides to rotate relative to one another to a second position so that said storage compartment is accessible to the user;

said storage compartment being covered by said first and second sides when said first and second sides are in a first position relative to one another.

10. (Currently Amended) A The utility knife as set forth in Claim 9, wherein said rotation mechanism, including a stud attached to and projecting from said first side and a curved track in said second side; said stud is received in said curved track; said stud is enabled to move along said curved track.

11. (Currently Amended) A The utility knife as set forth in Claim 9, further including a lock/release mechanism; said lock/release mechanism enabling said first and second sides to be locked into said first position and released to be placed in said second position.

12. (Currently Amended) A The utility knife as set forth in Claim 11, wherein said lock/release mechanism includes a push button release mechanism and a locking notch.

13. (Currently Amended) A utility knife comprising:

a housing;  
said housing having a forward portion, a rear portion and  
a middle portion;  
a cutting member;  
said cutting member being attached to said forward  
portion;  
said rear portion, including a grip for enabling a user  
to grasp the knife with a hand;  
said middle portion, further including an opening  
extending through said middle portion;  
said opening being adapted to receive ~~the~~ an index finger  
of user;  
said middle portion including a stabilizer pivot  
structure.

14. (Currently Amended) ~~a~~ The utility knife as set forth  
in claim 13, wherein said rear portion with protruding section  
includes a skid plate.

15. (Cancelled)